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PANEL 16

A TALE OF TWO CITIES: THE ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN SUPPORTING DIVERSITY IN THE ATLANTA PROJECT AND THE RE-BUILD LA PROJECT

Panel Chair: Kuldeep Kumar, Georgia State University

Panelists: Ed Davis, Clarke-Atlanta University
Benn R. Konsynski, Emory University
Ojelanki Ngwenyama, University of Michigan
Henry Whitlow, Planning Solutions

This panel describes the role of information technology in supporting community-based planning processes in **The Atlanta Project** and the **Re-Build Los Angeles Project**. The primary mission of the Re-Build LA (RLA) project and The Atlanta Project (TAP) is to improve the quality of life and the standard of living of the inner-city neighborhoods in Los Angeles and Atlanta. Whereas the RLA project was established in response to the South-Central LA riots in the aftermath of the Rodney King verdict in April 1992, TAP was established by President Jimmy Carter and the civic and business leaders in Atlanta in response to urban poverty and despair.

In both these projects, the underlying paradigm is one of community involvement and empowerment. This involvement and empowerment is to be achieved through a community-based planning, problem-solving, and implementation process. However, given the magnitude and variety of inner-city problems, and the diversity of stakeholders in the inner-city renewal process, it is essential to have a forum where these diverse stakeholders can come together to deliberate upon the issues. Traditionally, large town-hall meetings have provided such forums. Recently, both RLA and TAP have been experimenting with a variety of information technologies (e.g., Collaborative Meeting Support Systems, Geographical Information Systems, Information Repositories, On-line Databases, Answer-Centers, and IT-Based Plan-Exhibits) to support the deliberation process and the storage, coordination, and dissemination of the community improvement plans generated through these deliberations.

The panel will describe how the community-based planning process can be characterized as both a group process and an information process. It will then go on to show how information technology is being used to support the group processes and the information processing processes in the Rebuild LA and the Atlanta projects.